

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0041] with the following amended paragraph:

[0041] **Figure 7** illustrates a perspective view of one embodiment of the invention involving a number of dies **12** in ~~series~~parallel attached to a number of containment tubes **70**. The exit end of each containment tube **70** is attached to an extruder face **72**. This arrangement then permits the attachment to the extruder face of a circular cutting apparatus **74** having a number of individual cutting blades **76**. Such an arrangement is shown with ten individual extruder dies **12** connected to ten containment tubes **70**, and permits overall throughput rates through the extruder equal to the throughput rates previously described for prior art puffed rod production using the methods described above.